

State Public Records Request Shows Widespread Capture and Mortality of Non-Target Animals Related to Idaho Wolf Trapping During 2011/2012 Trapping Season

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 14

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BILL NO. SB 397

Rare Fishers Heavily Impacted

A response to a state public records request, submitted by Western Watersheds Project to the Idaho Fish and Game Department, shows widespread capture and mortality of non-target species related to wolf trapping and snaring in Idaho during the 2011/2012 trapping and snaring season. For the last two years, since wolves in the Northern Rockies were delisted, wolf trappers in Idaho have killed approximately 177 wolves.

However, during just the 2011/2012 trapping season these trappers have captured approximately 246 non-target animals. Of those captured, 116 were released alive, 118 were killed, and the fate of 12 others were not reported.

Trapping is notorious for the suffering caused to animals and for the likelihood that non-target animals will be captured or killed. Idaho wolf trappers are apparently no exception to this and have taken many non-target species while trapping for

3/24/2013

wolves.

The area where wolf trapping is allowed was expanded in some areas for the 2012/2013 season and 53 wolves have been taken with the use of leg hold traps and snares which are lengths of cable that tighten around the neck or limb of whatever animal happens to become ensnared by them. Trappers are only required to check their traps and snares once every 3 days.

Included in the list of species captured are rare species such as eagles, fishers, and goshawk. Despite the fact that fishers in Idaho are isolated and genetically distinct from other fisher populations, and there being no open season for fisher, a total of 22 fishers were captured and 15 of those died. According to a 2009 petition to list fishers as an endangered species in the northern Rockies:

"The trapping season for fishers has been closed in Idaho since the 1930's. The fisher is listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and ranked "G5/S1" (IDFG 2005a). This means that it is globally secure, but within the State of Idaho it is: "Critically imperiled. At high risk because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer occurrences), rapidly declining numbers, or other factors that make it particularly vulnerable to rangewide extinction or extirpation"

A total of 83 deer, 18 elk, and 4 moose were captured by wolf trappers and, of those captured, 27 deer and 1 elk were killed. Two domestic pets were killed and even a goose died. 26 mountain lions were also trapped, 13 of which were killed.

Since most trapping is conducted during winter months there was only 1 bear capture but it resulted in the death of the bear.

Jon Rachael, the IDFG State Wildlife Manager, explains that

the information in the public records response was gathered from two sources of information:

The first summary is taken from furtaker report cards required to be submitted by licensed trappers at the end of the trapping season. For the trapping season year ending June 30, 2012, we received reports from 154 trappers who indicated that they trapped for wolves. Forty-one of those trappers reported a total of 99 nontarget catches. Fifty of those were released alive. I have attached a summary of those nontarget catches by species as reported by the trappers. Please note that, because of the way this information was collected on the fur-taker report card, we have no way of determining from these reports which or how many of the reported nontarget animals were caught in traps set for wolves vs. traps set by for other species. For example, 2 wolves were reported taken as nontargets and released alive.

Nontarget species reported by fur trappers who also trapped for wolves.			
Species	#	#Unknown#	#
Caught	Caught	Released Alive	Dead
Black bear	1		1
Bobcat	2		2
Cottontail rabbit	2		1 1
Coyote	2		2
Deer	23	12	11
Dog	3	3	
Eagle	2	2	
Feral cat	1		1
Fisher	21	6	15
Flying Squirrel	1		1
Goshawk	1	1	
Lion	17	10	7
Marten	1		1

Packrat	1		1	
Porcupine	1			1
Raven	1		1	
River	1		1	
Otter				
Snowshoe	3			3
hair				
Squirrel	1			1
White-tail	12		8	4
deer				
Wolf	2		2	
TOTAL	99	0	50	49

Rachael continues:

The second summary is taken from response to a survey we conducted of 460 individuals who purchased a trapping license for the 2011-2012 trapping season and also had attended a wolf trapper education class. One hundred forty-three (143) of the 339 respondents indicated they trapped for wolves during the season and reported 147 nontarget captures, 66 of which were released alive (see Table).

While trapping for wolves, did you trap any of the following species?

If yes, how many of each species did you catch? Please indicate if they were released alive or if they died.

Non-Target species captured by wolf trappers who responded to the survey				
Species	#	#Unknown#	#	#
Caught	Caught		Released Alive	Dead
White-tailed	45		33	12
deer				
Mule	2		2	
deer				
Elk	18	6	11	1
Moose	4		4	
Mountain	9		3	6
lion				
Black	0			

bear				
Lynx	0			
Bobcat	9		4	5
Domestic	9		7	2
pets				
Coyote	45	6	1	38
Fisher	1		1	
Goose	1			1
Skunk	2			2
Raccoon	1			1
Raven	1			1
Total	147	12	66	69

When the information from the two sources of information is combined you can see the extent of carnage and injury associate with Idaho's wolf trapping.

Species Caught	Combined total of all data.			
	# Caught	#Unknown#	# Released Alive	# Dead
Black bear	1			1
Bobcat	11		6	5
Cottontail rabbit	2		1	1
Coyote	47	6	1	40
Deer,	2		2	
Mule Deer,	23		12	11
Unspecified Deer,	57		41	16
White-tailed Dog	3		3	
Domestic pets	9		7	2
Eagle	2		2	
Elk	18	6	11	1
Feral cat	1			1
Fisher	22		7	15
Flying Squirrel	1			1
Goose	1			1
Gosshawk	1		1	
Lynx	0			
Marten	1			1
Moose	4		4	
Mountain lion	26		13	13

Packrat	1		1	
Porcupine	1			1
Raccoon	1			1
Raven	2		1	1
River	1		1	
Otter				
Skunk	2			2
Snowshoe	3			3
hair				
Squirrel	1			1
Wolf	2		2	
TOTAL	246	12	116	118